

Washington, D.C. - Today, President Bush released his final budget proposal which would cut Medicare and Medicaid, slash important education and early literacy programs and even cut the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) which helps lower-income families keep the heat on.

"This troubling budget plan put forth by the President takes this country in the wrong direction," Congressman Charlie Wilson (OH-6) said. "Overall, I'm very disappointed to see heavy cuts in social programs. Programs like LIHEAP, Medicaid and Medicare are important to the residents of Ohio's Sixth District. As a Blue Dog Democrat I'm committed to keeping spending under control, however, cutting Medicare by \$556 billion over 10 years and cutting heating assistance by \$570 million is not the answer. That's just cutting people who are already hurting. Over the next couple of weeks I plan to take a look at the President's priorities and identify wasteful spending," Rep. Wilson said.

Rep. Wilson joined a chorus of criticism. Today, members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition also questioned the value of the President's Fiscal Year 2009 Budget, calling it "a clear extension of the administration's reckless fiscal policies over the past seven years."

Blue Dog members, like Rep. Wilson, reinforced the importance of reversing the country's precarious fiscal course and maintaining a strong commitment to fiscal discipline, including pay-as-you-go (PAYGO) budget rules.

The Congressional Budget Office's economic forecast indicates that for 2008 alone the deficit is already \$56 billion greater than the final deficit for 2007, a number which does not include the costs of an economic stimulus package or additional funding for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Taking these likely costs into account, the 2008 deficit could exceed \$400 billion.

"And that's just the tip of the iceberg in this 2,222 page budget document put forth by the President," Wilson said.

Under the President's plan, the school lunch program would be cut from \$50 million to \$39 million.

"Over 98% of the schools in Ohio participate in the school lunch program. When you consider that one in six children in Ohio is at risk for hunger, it's doesn't make sense to cut here," Rep. Wilson said.

"Congress must be united as we work for what's right for America," Rep. Wilson continued. "I'm eager to work together as we take this country in a new direction. In that spirit, I looked for and found a positive portion of the President's budget. I'm pleased to see \$641 million in the President's budget for carbon capture and storage research. I believe coal is our future and that

this technology will play a huge role in the economic re-development of the Ohio River Valley," Rep. Wilson said.

WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR OHIO:

Under the President's Budget Proposal Ohio would lose:

\$5,408,000 in law enforcement grants

\$24,018,000 in firefighters grants

\$14,369,000 for dislocated workers

\$4,788,000 in grants to improve teacher quality, as required by No Child Left Behind

\$45,210,000 in career and technical education funding

\$1,342,000 in Child care development block grant funding

\$16,173,000 in LIHEAP funding

\$22,125,000 in federal-Aid Highways Program funding

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